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Division of Planning  
and Environment

### STAFF REPORT

#### SECTIONS A14-14 THRU A14-25 OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

**Applicant:** Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A  
**Municipality:** Brookhaven  
**Location:** n/e/c Railroad Ave and Hawkins Ave.

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**Received:** 6/29/20  
**File Number:** BR-20-06  
**T.P.I.N.:** 0200 79900 0400 044000, et. al.  
**Jurisdiction:** w/in one mile of MacArthur Airport

#### ZONING DATA

- Zoning Classification: TOD
- Minimum Lot Area: N/A
- Section 278: N/A
- Obtained Variance: N/A

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

- Within Agricultural District: No
- Shoreline Resource/Hazard Consideration: No
- Received Health Services Approval: No
- Property Considered for Affordable Housing Criteria: Yes
- Property has Historical/Archaeological Significance: No
- Property Previously Subdivided: No
- Property Previously Reviewed by Planning Commission: Yes
  - Date: 6/4/2014 (COZ); 5/4/2015 (phase 1)
- SEQRA Information: Yes
- SEQRA Type: DEIS
- Minority or Economic Distressed: No

#### SITE DESCRIPTION

- Present Land Use: light industrial and commercial
- Existing Structures: yes, various block and wood buildings
- General Character of Site: level
- Range of Elevation within Site: 105 -110 feet amsl

- Cover: bldgs./ asphalt
- Soil Types: Cut and fill land & Riverhead Association
- Range of Slopes (Soils Map): 0-3%
- Waterbodies or Wetlands: none

#### **NATURE OF SUBDIVISION/ NATURE OF MUNICIPAL ZONING REQUEST**

- Type: site plan
- Layout: mixed use TOD
- Area of Tract: 12.086 ac
- Yield Map:
  - No. of Lots: 0
  - Lot Area Range: Sq. Ft.
- Open Space: N/A

#### **ACCESS**

- Roads: Existing, Railroad Ave. and Hawkins Ave.
- Driveways: Private

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

- Stormwater Drainage
  - Design of System: CB - LP
  - Recharge Basins: no
- Groundwater Management Zone: I
- Water Supply: public
- Sanitary Sewers: proposed pump station to SCSD #3 Southwest

### **PROPOSAL DETAILS**

**OVERVIEW** – Applicants request Site Plan approval from the Town of Brookhaven Planning Board for the demolition of existing industrial and commercial structures and the construction of 388 residential units, 79,000 sf of retail/restaurant space, 15,901 SF of office space, parking garages, surface parking, roadways, drainage structures, outdoor spaces, landscaping, lighting and public road improvements. The subject property is approximately 12.1 acres.

The subject phase 2A development proposes a total of 525,198 gross square feet of area in a mix of 7 buildings including a three-story parking garage, a three-story residential building, two one-story restaurants, and three five-story mixed use commercial (restaurant), retail and residential unit buildings.

Off street parking is to be provided by a small amount of surface parking and a three-story parking garage (containing 5 levels; two below grade). Building B on the proposed site plan includes below grade parking. Total off street parking stalls are 1,232 spaces and exceeds code requirements.

Storm water runoff generated from the site is to be accommodated on site in subsurface leaching pools and drywell structures.

Wastewater generated by the proposed project is intended to be conveyed for treatment and disposal to the Southwest Sewer District (SCSD #3) via the construction of a pump station at the south east corner of the subject development area. As part of the overall Ronkonkoma Hub development plan the applicants are proposing the dedication of 0.27 acres to the County of Suffolk for the wastewater pump station. Anticipated sanitary discharge associated with the proposed Phase 2A development will be 119,110 gpd.

Motor Vehicle Access to the subject site is proposed via one ingress/egresses to Railroad Avenue from the below grade parking lot of Building B (a mixed use residential-retail-restaurant). This access is just west of the existing Railroad Avenue access to the MTA parking garage. Three uncontrolled ingress/egress locations to surface level parking (and eventually through the site to the onsite 5 level parking garage) are from Hawkins Avenue. Along Union Avenue is the street ingress/egress to the proposed three story-five level parking garage. A little further east is another entrance to the below grade levels of the onsite parking garage. There is a rear entrance to the existing MTA parking garage further east along Union Avenue making three parking garage curb cuts along Union Avenue in this vicinity. The applicant is proposing road dedications to the Town of Brookhaven along Railroad, Hawkins, and Union Avenues for ROW improvements.

The project area is predominantly a mix use of residential and commercial development with buildings related to auto repair, contracting, outdoor storage and parking associated with the LIRR Ronkonkoma Station. To the west are improved light industrial uses and residential uses along the west side of Hawkins Avenue. To the north across Union Ave., are residentially zoned and developed properties; some with non-conforming commercial uses. The subject property abuts improved MTA (parking garage) land zoned TDD which carries further to the east. To the South the subject property abuts Railroad Avenue and the LIRR Ronkonkoma Station and further to the south land in the Town of Islip associated with railroad parking and the MacArthur Airport.

The proposed project is not located in a Suffolk County Pine Barrens Zone. The subject parcel is not located in a NYS Critical Environmental Area or Special Groundwater Protection Area (SGPA). The site is situated over Hydro-geologic Management Zone I. The subject property contains no State or local regulated freshwater wetlands

The propose Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A development has previously been fully evaluated under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and precipitated "Findings" issued by the Brookhaven Town Board June 24, 2014. The Findings set forth specific conditions and criteria under which future actions will be undertaken or approved. The specific conditions from the Town's Finding Statement applicable to Phase 2A and Suffolk County Planning Commission review include:

Total development of the Ronkonkoma Hub area shall not exceed 1,450 units; sanitary discharge (whether through connection to an existing Suffolk County sewage treatment plant (STP), to a new Suffolk County STP or to another approved sewage treatment facility ...shall not exceed 400,000 gpd.; roadways adjacent to the proposed phase 2A development area (Railroad Avenue, Hawkins Avenue and Union Avenue) will be improved as part of the proposed development.

The Suffolk County Planning Commission reviewed and approved the Ronkonkoma Hub Transit Oriented Development District (TOD) Plan and change of zone to TOD on June 4, 2014 (BR-14-06). The approval for the change of zone reads as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Suffolk County Planning Commission approves the change of zone referral for approximately 53.73 acres of land to the Transit-Oriented Development District, subject to the following Comments:

1. It is the belief of the Suffolk County Planning Commission that the proposed actions referred to the Planning Commission for the Ronkonkoma Hub are intended to make one of the busiest suburban train stations in the entire LIRR system a better place by incorporating TOD elements for this well-functioning major multi-modal transportation hub that serves a large region of Suffolk County.

The actions of the Town of Brookhaven are appropriate and advance the use of TOD as a planning tool in Suffolk County.

New York State General Municipal Law, Section 239-I provides for the Suffolk County Planning Commission to consider inter-community issues. Included in such issues are compatibility of land uses, community character, public convenience and maintaining of a satisfactory community environment. It is the belief of the Commission that the Ronkonkoma Hub Transit Oriented Development District strives for greater harmony between the above considerations.

2. Continued coordination with the Suffolk County Department of Public Works is in order with respect to regional waste water collection and treatment.
3. The proposed TOD Code is intended to be applicable to the Ronkonkoma Hub. Ideally variations of the TOD Code could be evaluated for other rail road stations in the Town. Each TOD could be created with the context of the community character surrounding the rail road station and at appropriate densities.
4. The Town should consider incorporating green methodologies for storm water management into the TOD code. The Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook and bulletin regarding managing storm water should be reviewed.
5. The Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook and publications regarding public safety and universal design should be reviewed and the Town should consider incorporating appropriate best practices where practical into the TOD district code.
6. The Town of Brookhaven should seek to maintain a dialogue with the Town of Islip toward developing a unified approach for redevelopment of the Ronkonkoma Hub area.
7. The Town should explore bike access within the District.
8. The Town should ensure that there is a sufficient public space throughout the Ronkonkoma HUB TOD.

In addition the Suffolk County Planning Commission reviewed and approved the phase one (1) development site plan for the Ronkonkoma Hub on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2015. The Commission's approval with comment resolution read:

1. A pedestrian circulation plan that provides a clear connection to the LIRR Ronkonkoma Train Station and Suffolk County Transit stops accounting for motor vehicle conflicts and pedestrian safety should be developed. The pedestrian circulation plan shall also account for a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) location to be situated on the north side of the LIRR tracks.
2. Ten percent (10%) of the units (50 units) should be set aside for workforce housing purposes.
3. The applicant should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission publication on Managing Stormwater-Natural Vegetation and Green Methodologies and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
4. Waste water treatment and disposal issues should be reviewed with the Suffolk County Department of Public Works and the Department of Health as early as possible.
5. The applicant should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission

Guidebook particularly with respect to energy efficiency and incorporate where practical, elements contained therein applicable to residential uses.

6. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to public safety and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
7. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to universal design and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
8. The Town of Brookhaven should seek to maintain a dialogue with the Town of Islip toward developing a unified approach for redevelopment of the Ronkonkoma Hub area.
9. The applicant should consider noise related issues due to the operation of the LIRR Ronkonkoma Station. All residential structures in the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 1 project should be required to be constructed using materials and techniques that will reduce interior noise levels in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development or other authority that has promulgated standards for reduction of interior noise levels. In addition, it should be disclosed to potential occupants that they will be moving adjacent to an active railroad station and may be subject to noise and vibration from the operation of that facility and noise from passing trains

## **STAFF ANALYSIS**

### **GENERAL MUNICIPAL LAW CONSIDERATIONS:**

New York State General Municipal Law, Section 239-I provides for the Suffolk County Planning Commission to consider inter-community issues. Included in such issues are compatibility of land uses, community character, public convenience and maintaining of a satisfactory community environment.

As indicated above, "...It is the belief of the Commission that the Ronkonkoma Hub Transit Oriented Development District strives for greater harmony between the above considerations... The Town of Brookhaven should seek to maintain a dialogue with the Town of Islip toward developing a unified approach for redevelopment of the Ronkonkoma Hub area."

The proposed development is in close proximity – less than a quarter of a mile to the LIRR Ronkonkoma Station. The general public is not anticipated to be significantly inconvenienced by the proposed use. All additional motor vehicle traffic issues are proposed to be accommodated via numerous congestion mitigation projects itemized in the Traffic Mitigation Table in the Towns adopted SEQRA Findings Statement.

### **LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposed mixed use commercial-residential complex of the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A development is consistent with the TOD Land Use and Implementation Plan adopted by the Town of Brookhaven and approved by the Suffolk County Planning Commission on June 4, 2014 (BR-14-06).

## **SUFFOLK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS:**

The Suffolk County Planning Commissions has identified six general Critical County Wide Priorities and include:

1. Environmental Protection
2. Energy efficiency
3. Economic Development, Equity and Sustainability
4. Housing Diversity
5. Transportation and
6. Public Safety

These policies are reflected in the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook (unanimously adopted July 11, 2012). Below are items for consideration regarding the above policies.

The development is proposed to connect to Suffolk County Sewer District # 3 (Southwest) via a pump station constructed within the overall development and connected to a nearly completed force main to the district. Continued review by the Suffolk County Department of Public Works is warranted and the applicant should be directed to continue dialogue with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services and the SCDPW as soon as possible.

While it is anticipated that all storm water runoff will be retained on site and comply with Town of Brookhaven and NYS SWPPP requirements there are little amenities demonstrated on the site plan submitted to the Suffolk County Planning Commission in the way of natural treatments to storm water runoff. The applicant should be directed to consult the Suffolk County Planning Commission Publication on Managing Stormwater-Natural Vegetation and Green Methodologies and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.

It is the belief of staff that all residential structures in the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A project should be required to be constructed using materials and techniques that will reduce interior noise levels in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development or other authority that has promulgated standards for reduction of interior noise levels. In addition, it should be disclosed to potential occupants that they will be moving adjacent to an active railroad station and within a mile of an airport and may be subject to noise and vibration from the operation of that facility and noise from passing trains and aircraft

Little mention of the consideration of energy efficiency is provided in the referral material to the Suffolk County Planning Commission. The applicants should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook particularly with respect to energy efficiency and incorporate where practical, design elements contained therein.

This development supports the Planning Commission's priority on Housing Diversity by providing residential units in a walkable distance to major mass transit infrastructure in a region that is predominately single family detached homes. Little discussion however is provided in the referral materials to the Suffolk County Planning Commission on the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A developments compliance with the NYS Long Island Workforce Housing Act. Roughly 10% of the units (39 units) should be set aside for workforce housing purposes. It is not indicated how the 388 Phase 2A development units dovetail into the overall workforce housing plan for the Hub.

It is the belief of the staff that the applicant should provide a pedestrian circulation plan that provides a clear connection to the LIRR Ronkonkoma Train Station and Suffolk County Transit stops accounting for motor vehicle conflicts and pedestrian safety. The pedestrian circulation plan should also account for a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) location to be situated on the north side of the tracks. Transit oriented development districts derive their viability from the multi-modal aspects of transportation provided by the “hub.” Not demonstrating and implementing a pedestrian circulation plan highlighting walkability and connectivity to train, bus, BRT, bicycle, and other modes of transportation would be to ignore the intent of the TOD.

More flexibility in design (addition of rain gardens and bio-swales for example) can be achieved by the reduction in surface off street parking. A review of the SCPC Parking Stall Demand Reduction Model Code

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reveals that one can achieve through covenants on the development proposal, reductions in off-street parking demand. For example, applying the provision of “unbundling” the parking costs from monthly rent can reduce the parking demand on-site by an additional 20% (246 spaces). Combination of PSDR techniques can reduce parking demand even further. According to the SCPC study, the addition of a bus stop and shelter can reduce parking demand by 25%. It is the belief of the SCPC staff that the applicant and the Town of Brookhaven should review the Planning Commission Publication on Parking Stall Demand Reduction and incorporate into the proposal techniques that will reduce parking demand and trip generation.

It is the belief of the staff that any on site recycling of demolition materials should be conducted at the farthest point from any sensitive residential receptors to reduce the issues related to noise and dust from recycling operations.

Little discussion is made in the application to the Town and referred to the Commission on public safety and universal design. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to public safety and universal design and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Approval** of the Site Plan for the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A development with the following comments:

1. Ten percent (10%) of the units (39 units) should be set aside for workforce housing purposes.
2. All residential structures in the Ronkonkoma Hub Phase 2A project should be required to be constructed using materials and techniques that will reduce interior noise levels in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Housing and Urban Development or other authority that has promulgated standards for reduction of interior noise levels. In addition, it should be disclosed to potential occupants that they will be moving adjacent to an active railroad station and within one mile of an airport and may be subject to noise and vibration from the operation and noise from passing trains and flying aircraft.

3. A pedestrian circulation plan that provides a clear connection to the LIRR Ronkonkoma Train Station and Suffolk County Transit stops accounting for motor vehicle conflicts and pedestrian safety shall be developed. The pedestrian circulation plan shall also account for a proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) locations to be situated at locations within and around the Ronkonkoma Hub development.
4. The applicants should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission publication on Managing Stormwater-Natural Vegetation and Green Methodologies and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
5. Waste water treatment and disposal issues should continue to be reviewed with the Suffolk County Department of Public Works and the Department of Health as early as possible.
6. The applicant should be encouraged to review the Suffolk County Planning Commission Guidebook particularly with respect to energy efficiency and incorporate where practical, elements contained therein applicable to residential uses.
7. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to public safety and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
8. The applicant should review the Planning Commission guidelines particularly related to universal design and incorporate into the proposal, where practical, design elements contained therein.
9. The Town of Brookhaven should seek to maintain a dialogue with the Town of Islip toward developing a unified approach for redevelopment of the Ronkonkoma Hub area.
10. A review of the SCPC Parking Stall Demand Reduction Model Code

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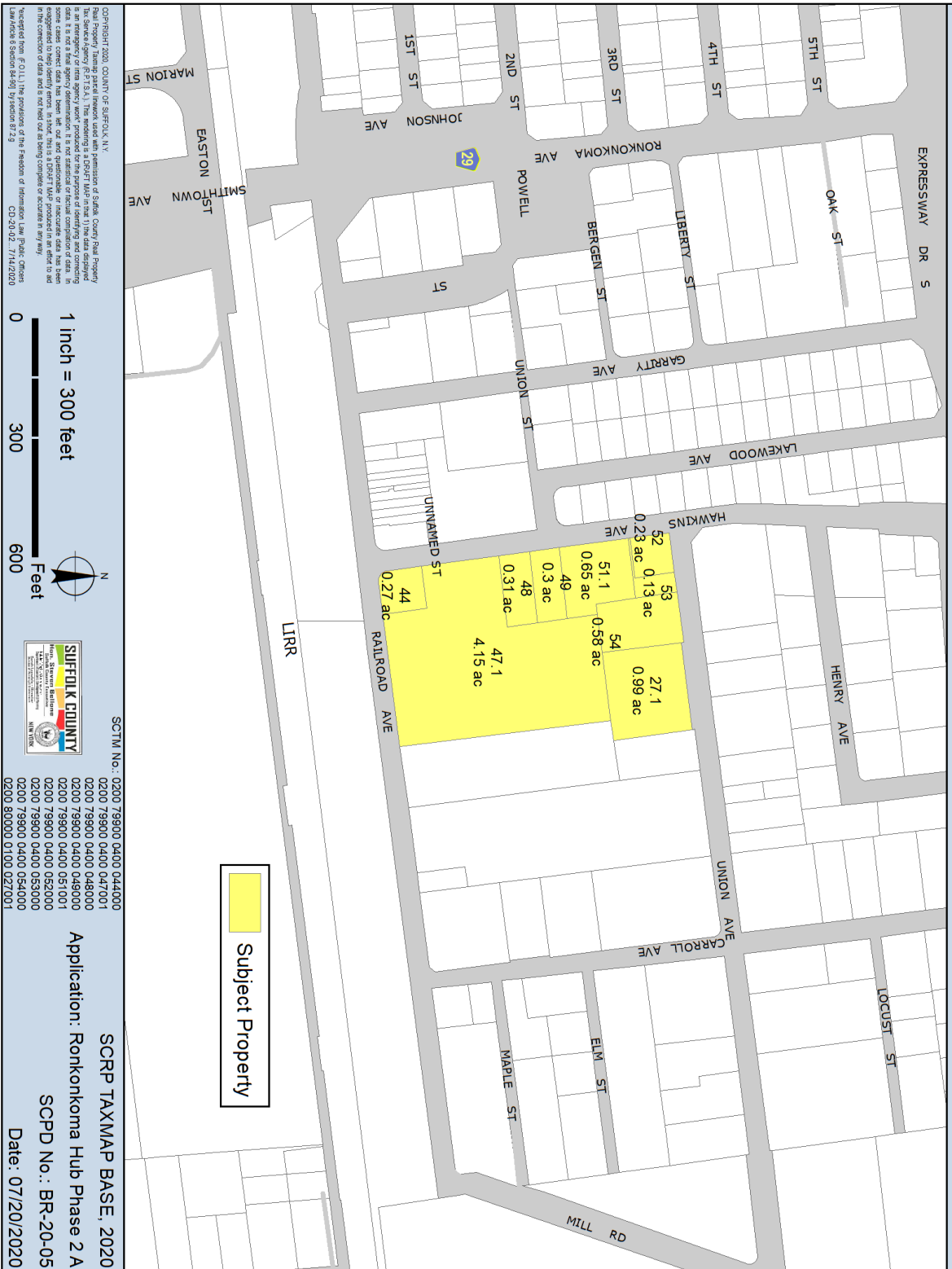
reveals that one can achieve through covenants on the development proposal, reductions in off-street parking demand.

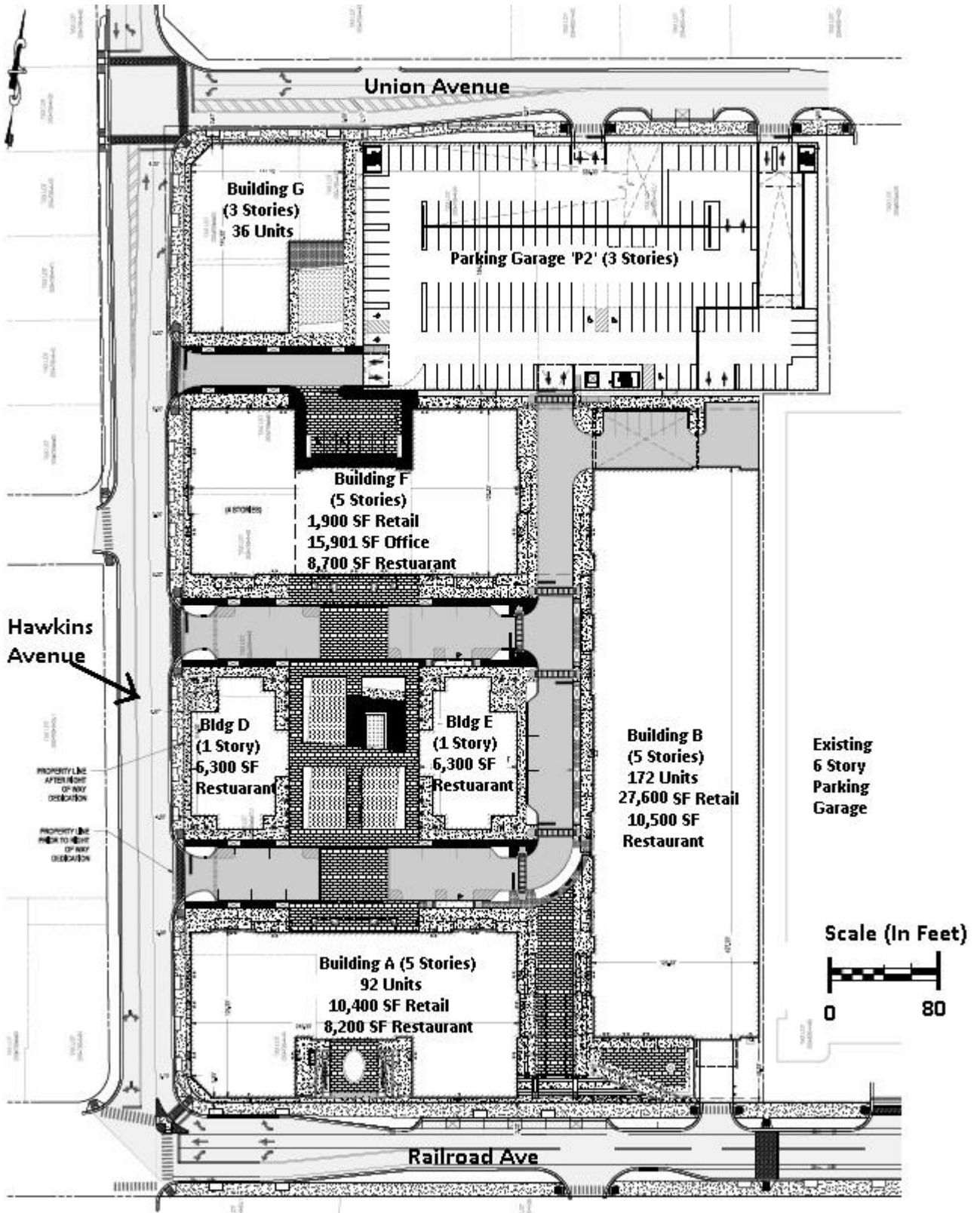
11. Any on site recycling of demolition materials should be conducted at the farthest point from any sensitive residential receptors to reduce the issues related to noise and dust from recycling operations.



# RONKONKOMA HUB PHASE 2 A

Town of Brookhaven - Suffolk County, New York





## LOCATION MAP

SCALE 1" = 1,000'



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